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Tuna Newsletter

National Marine Fisheries Service
- Southwest Region
- Southwest Fisheries Science Center

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U.S. TUNA STATISTICS

Editor's note: The following articles were prepared by NMFS personnel from data and information gathered from sources in the U.S. tuna industry and government.

U.S. CANNED TUNA INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS, FIRST QUARTER 1995

Total receipts of tuna by U.S. canners during the first quarter of 1995 (January-March) increased by 3% to the equivalent of 112,200 short tons (st) of whole fish (round weight), compared to the first quarter of 1994 (Table 1). The principal species received was skipjack tuna with 62% of the total, followed by albacore and yellowfin tuna, with 18% and 15% of the total, respectively. Skipjack tuna receipts were up by 28% for the quarter, while albacore and yellowfin tuna receipts were down by 2% and 41%, respectively.

Although the vast majority of tuna received by U.S. canners is whole fish, some quantity of tuna is received as loins or gilled- and-gutted. Receipts of tuna loins for the first quarter of 1995 were down by 57%. (The round weight totals used above were approximated by converting weights of loins and gilled-and-gutted receipts by factors of 2.25 and 1.11, respectively. For the remainder of this article, unconverted receipts are used unless otherwise stated.)

Receipts of tuna by U.S. canners in American Samoa and California for the first quarter of 1995 were up by 3%, compared to the first quarter of 1994, due to a large increase in skipjack tuna receipts (Table 2). Receipts in Puerto Rico were up by

Table 1. Total U.S. cannery receipts (st) by species for the first quarters of 1994 and 1995. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Jan-Mar	Type	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
1994	ROUND	25,600	46,200	20,400	92,200
	GILLED & GUTTED	*	*	300	300
	LOIN	0	3,700	3,800	7,500
	TOTAL (as received)	25,600	49,900	24,500	100,000
	TOTAL (round weight)[2]	25,600	54,600	29,300	109,400
1995	ROUND	25,000	63,300	16,300	104,600
	GILLED & GUTTED	0	0	300	300
	LOIN	0	3,000	300	3,200
	TOTAL (as received)	25,000	66,200	16,800	108,100
	TOTAL (round weight)[2]	25,000	69,900	17,200	112,200

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

[2]Converted to round weight by using factors of 1.11 for gilled-and-gutted and 2.25 for loins.

Table 2. U.S. cannery receipts (st) of domestic and imported tuna by species for the first quarters of 1994, 1995 and the recent (1990-94) first quarter averages. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Jan-Mar	Source	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
		AMERICAN SAMOA & CALIFORNIA			
1994	DOMESTIC	200	28,700	5,500	34,400
	IMPORTED	10,100	6,200	4,400	20,600
	TOTAL	10,300	34,900	9,900	55,000
1995	DOMESTIC	2,200	34,400	2,700	39,300
	IMPORTED	8,500	8,100	600	17,200
	TOTAL	10,700	42,500	3,300	56,500
1990-94 Average	DOMESTIC	1,800	25,300	8,000	35,100
	IMPORTED	7,400	6,000	2,200	15,600
	TOTAL	9,200	31,300	10,200	50,700
		PUERTO RICO			
1994	DOMESTIC	100	5,100	4,700	9,900
	IMPORTED	15,200	10,000	9,900	35,100
	TOTAL	15,300	15,100	14,600	44,900
1995	DOMESTIC	100	6,900	5,800	12,800
	IMPORTED	14,200	16,900	7,800	38,900
	TOTAL	14,300	23,800	13,600	51,700
1990-94 Average	DOMESTIC	100	5,600	5,000	10,700
	IMPORTED	12,500	13,200	9,100	34,800
	TOTAL	12,600	18,800	14,200	45,600
		TOTAL			
1994	DOMESTIC	300	33,800	10,200	44,300
	IMPORTED	25,300	16,100	14,300	55,700
	TOTAL	25,600	49,900	24,500	100,000
1995	DOMESTIC	2,300	41,300	8,500	52,000
	IMPORTED	22,800	25,000	8,300	56,100
	TOTAL	25,000	66,200	16,800	108,100
1990-94 Average	DOMESTIC	1,900	30,800	13,100	45,900
	IMPORTED	19,900	19,200	11,300	50,400
	TOTAL	21,800	50,100	24,400	96,300

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

15%, with an increase in skipjack more than offsetting slight decreases in albacore and yellowfin tuna receipts.

Domestic deliveries to U.S. canners were up by 14% in American Samoa and California and down by 29% in Puerto Rico. Skipjack tuna was easily the largest component of all domestic deliveries at 41,300 st, followed by yellowfin tuna, 8,500 st, and albacore, 2,300 st. Domestic deliveries accounted for 48% of the tuna delivered to U.S. canners during the first quarter of the year.

Skipjack tuna was the leading import for the first quarter of 1995 at 25,000 st, followed by albacore and yellowfin tuna at 22,800 st and 8,300 st, respectively (Table 3). The leading non-U.S. supplier was Taiwan, with 32% of the import market, followed by South Korea and France with 16% and 14% of the market, respectively. The western Pacific Ocean was the main source of all three important tuna species (Table 4): albacore (14,100 st), skipjack tuna (55,100 st) and yellowfin tuna (10,900 st).

In 1994 U.S. canneries produced over 33 million standard cases (48 6.125-ounce cans per case) of canned tuna valued at $963 million (Table 5). Light meat tunas (yellowfin and skipjack) accounted for 74% of that production in cases and 58% in value. The weighted, ex-vessel price per ton for tuna delivered to U.S. canneries in 1994 was $1,763 for albacore, $972 for yellowfin and $862 for skipjack.

U.S. imports of canned tuna packed in water totaled 41,600 st for the first quarter of 1995, down 30% from 1994. As of June 18, 1995, imports of canned tuna stood at 58,100 st, down 24% from the previous year.

U.S. TUNA FISHERIES UPDATE

EASTERN PACIFIC TROPICAL TUNA FISHERY

During the period January through June 1995, seven U.S. tuna purse seiners participated in the eastern tropical Pacific tuna fishery and caught an estimated 8,800 metric tons (mt) of yellowfin and bigeye tuna and 6,200 mt of skipjack tuna (Figure 1). The combined yellowfin and bigeye tuna catch was down 8% from the 1994 catch for the same period while the skipjack tuna catch was down 15%.

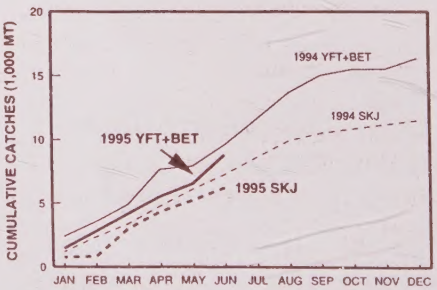

Figure 1. Cumulative tuna catches, by month, for the U.S. eastern Pacific purse seine fishery, 1994 and 1995.

Table 3. U.S. cannery imports (st) of tuna by species and source (flag of catcher vessel) for the first quarter of 1995. Totals for the first quarter of 1994 are given for comparison. Note that the flag of the catcher vessel does not necessarily reflect the country of export or point of shipment. Totals may not add due to rounding.

VESSEL FLAG	1995				1994
	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL	TOTAL
ECUADOR	0	300	300	700	2,100
FSM	0	1,900	100	2,000	700
FRANCE	*	6,000	1,900	8,000	8,700
JAPAN	5,900	500	0	6,400	4,300
NEW ZEALAND	2,000	0	0	2,000	1,300
PANAMA	*	300	0	300	2,200
PORTUGAL	1,100	0	0	1,100	2,000
SOUTH AFRICA	3,500	200	0	3,600	3,100
SOUTH KOREA	600	7,000	1,300	8,900	3,600
SPAIN	0	500	0	500	5,700
TAIWAN	9,300	4,300	4,200	17,700	14,600
USA	0	1,600	100	1,700	700
VENEZUELA	0	500	100	600	1,200
UNKNOWN	0	1,700	100	1,800	1,600
OTHER	300	200	200	700	3,800
TOTAL	22,800	25,000	8,300	56,100	55,700

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

Table 4. Receipts (st) of tuna by U.S. canneries by species and area of capture for the first quarters of 1994 and 1995. Totals may not add due to rounding.

SOURCE January-March	Albacore		Skipjack		Yellowfin[1]	
	1994	1995	1994	1995	1994	1995
E. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	7,400	6,500	7,500	200	2,600	0
TOTAL	7,400	6,500	7,500	200	2,600	0
W. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	2,200	1,300	800	500	500	0
TOTAL	2,200	1,300	800	500	500	0
E. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	*	1,900	1,300	2,700	2,900
IMPORTED	200	0	700	2,400	1,500	1,100
TOTAL	200	0	2,700	3,700	4,200	4,000
W. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	300	2,300	31,900	40,000	7,500	5,600
IMPORTED	12,800	11,900	5,800	15,100	3,700	5,300
TOTAL	13,100	14,100	37,700	55,100	11,200	10,900
INDIAN OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	2,600	3,100	1,400	6,800	5,900	1,900
TOTAL	2,600	3,100	1,400	6,800	5,900	1,900

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

The drop in catches in 1995 is largely due to a decrease in the size of the U.S. fleet which consisted of 12 active seiners during the same period in 1994. The fleet continues to concentrate its effort on tunas not associated with dolphins.

WESTERN PACIFIC TROPICAL TUNA FISHERY

For the period January through March 1995, U.S. tuna purse seiners fishing in the western tropical Pacific under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty landed an estimated 54,700 mt of skipjack tuna and 4,400 mt of yellowfin and bigeye tuna (Figure 2). The skipjack tuna landings were up 65% from the 1994 landings and the combined yellowfin and bigeye tuna

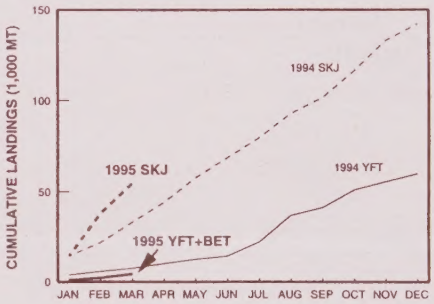

Figure 2. Cumulative tuna landings, by month, for the U.S. western tropical Pacific purse seine fishery, 1994 and 1995.

landings were down 41%. The overall increase in landings in 1995 is largely due to greater fishing effort, with 41 vessels landing tuna from 55 fishing trips in 1995 compared to 34 vessels and 45 trips in 1994. *(Report provided by Doug Prescott, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1995 North Pacific albacore troll season began in early May but was slow through the first half of the month. Fishing in late June improved and was centered near the international dateline, between 35°N and 40°N. By early July, several vessels were offloading at sea to transport vessels to tranship

Table 5. Production by U.S. tuna canneries for 1993 and 1994.

YEAR	Product	White Meat	Light Meat	TOTAL
1993	Pounds	149,940,527	468,769,156	618,709,683
	Standard Cases[1]	7,689,258	24,039,444	31,728,702
	Value	$373,417,517	$530,471,694	$903,889,211
1994	Pounds	160,451,153	449,495,727	609,495,880
	Standard Cases[1]	8,732,036	24,437,808	33,169,844
	Value	$401,091,683	$562,080,329	$963,172,012

[1]For 1993, a standard case is equal to 48 6.5-ounce cans, or 19.5 pounds of product; for 1994, a standard case is equal to 48 6.125-ounce cans, or 18.375 pounds of product.

Table 6. U.S. commercial landings of Atlantic bluefin tuna for 1995 through June 16.

Category	# of Fish	Avg. Wt. (lbs.)	Gross Wt. (mt)	Quota (mt)
GENERAL	1	494	0.2	531
Handline	0	-	0.0	
Rod & Reel	1	494	0.2	
Harpoon	0	-	0.0	
HARPOON	2	307	0.3	53
INCIDENTAL	190	538	46.4	113
N. Longline	34	486	7.5	23
S. Longline	140	576	36.6	86
Other	16	322	2.3	4
PURSE SEINE	0	-	0.0	301
RESERVE	17	322.1	2.5	18
TOTAL	210	518	49.4	1,016

their catches to American Samoa. As the season progresses, vessels are expected to move eastward toward the U.S. West Coast. Albacore fishing near the U.S. coast will be dependent on development of coastal upwelling with significant temperature gradients that concentrate forage for albacore. Last season, vessels enjoyed good catches in such upwelling areas close to shore. *(Report provided by John Childers, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1994-95 U.S. South Pacific albacore fishery ended in April 1995. Approximately 21 U.S. vessels participated in the fishery, compared to 14 vessels in the 1993-94 fishery. The low number of vessels fishing in the South Pacific the past two seasons is partly due to poor fishing conditions in recent years. U.S. fishermen have noted the persistence of *El Niño*-type conditions in the equatorial regions of the central Pacific and its associated poor albacore fishing conditions. Many, therefore, did not venture to the South Pacific for the 1994-95 season. Preliminary estimated landings from U.S. vessels total approximately 1,800 mt, a substantial increase from the previous season's total of 603 mt. The vessels that participated encountered exceptionally good fishing. *(Report provided by John Childers, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

WESTERN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA FISHERY

As of June 16, 210 large Atlantic bluefin tuna have been harvested by federally permitted vessels under the 1995 quota. The Incidental Catch Category, which is primarily comprised of longline gear, is off to a slow start this year. The average weight of bluefin caught in the northern sector (north of 34°N latitude), 486 pounds, is greater by about 125 lbs than last year's average weight of 359 pounds. The average weight of fish landed in the southern sector, 576 pounds, is slightly up from last year's average weight of 569 pounds. Only 46 mt of the 113 mt allocated to this category have been harvested to date. Current catch rates indicate that the Incidental Catch Category will likely remain open for the duration of the year. The Harpoon and General categories fishing seasons both opened June 1. A summary of U.S. Atlantic bluefin tuna landings for all commercial categories for 1995 is given in Table 6. The NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division provides daily tally estimates of Atlantic bluefin tuna landings for each of the commercial categories. This prerecorded, telephonic information is available by dialing 301-713-1279 (24 hours a day) or 508-281-9260 (between 5:00 pm and 7:00 am).

The Highly Migratory Species Division intends to publish regulations that amend existing fishing regulations later this year. These regulations may include quota modifications, "days off" to control fishing effort in the General Category, technical amendments, and revisions to the fishery permit requirements. (Report provided by Kevin B. Foster, NMFS Northeast Region, Gloucester, MA)

REPORTS

Editor's note: Original reports are published as a service to subscribers and may not represent the views of the NMFS. Readers should contact the authors of reports for details, if needed.

MEASUREMENTS OF THE EQUATORIAL FRONT AND TROPICAL INSTABILITY WAVES

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Trade winds and the earth's rotation combine to produce a region of upwelling which spans from the coast of Peru out along the equatorial Pacific. This oceanic upwelling brings relatively cold, nutrient-rich water to the surface where it supports an abundant community of marine life, distinct from tropical Pacific waters to the north. The boundary between these two ocean regimes is formed by the equatorial front, where the temperature can drop several degrees in the span of a few miles.

Apart from these vertical motions, the equatorial and tropical Pacific is characterized by strong, zonal currents. The South Equatorial Current (SEC) moves westward between 2°S and 4°N, while the North Equatorial Counter Current (NECC) moves eastward between about 4°N and 9°N. Both currents typically move about 50 cm/s. Embedded within the SEC is the narrow Equatorial Undercurrent (EUC) with eastward velocities below the surface reaching 1 m/s. These zonal currents are connected with the vertical motions north and south of the equatorial front by northward flow from the SEC towards the NECC.

Each year, from August through December, the SEC becomes unstable, meandering north and south, and consequently displacing the equatorial front. Measurements from current meters show these instabilities as oscillations in the EUC, SEC, and NECC, with periods ranging from 15-30 days. From space, satellites see them as waves propagating westward along the equator (Figure 3). Present theory explains these phenomena as the result of increased forcing of the SEC by the southeast trade winds in the fall. During years when the trades fail to fill in, such as during *El Niño*, the instabilities are absent.

In 1990, researchers from the University of Hawaii conducted two cruises to the region 2-7°N and 140°W to study these phenomena as part of the Tropical Instability Wave Experiment (TIWE). During the first cruise (August), the equatorial front was surveyed in detail using a towed instrument platform. During the second cruise (November-December), the structure of an instability was observed by making measurements at stations forming a 90-nm by 160-nm box centered on 140°W and 3.5°N. On both occasions, measurements were made of the velocity, temperature, and salinity. Satellite images were received on board the ship in real-time, allowing the investigators to locate the front and sample it closely.

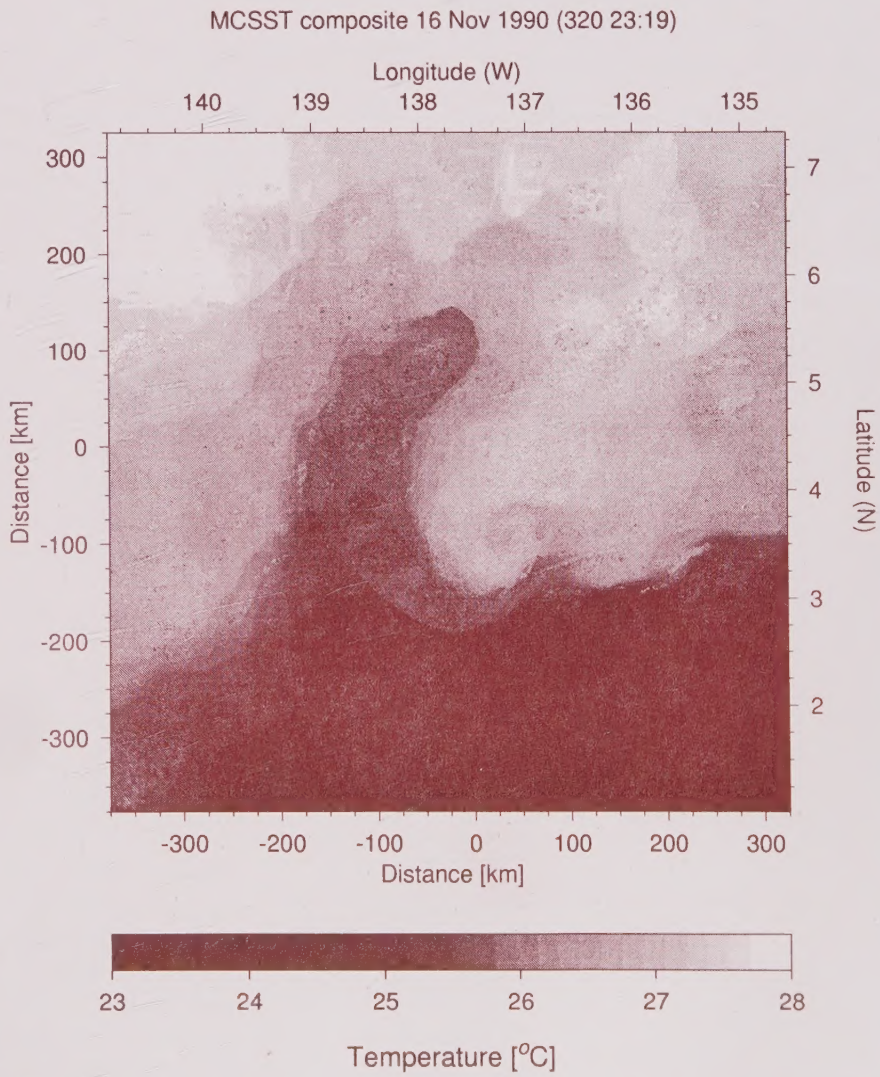

Figure 3. Tropical instability wave in the Pacific Ocean's South Equatorial Current, detected by satellite during November 1990.

One of the major findings of the experiment is that instabilities between the SEC and the NECC behave like clockwise rotating eddies, about 250 km in diameter, traveling westward at 30 cm/s, or 14 nautical miles per day (Figure 4). These propagating eddies deform the equatorial front by pulling it northward along the leading, or westward edge, and southward along the trailing, or eastward edge (Figure 3). Consequently, instability waves could be responsible for movements of the equatorial front out of a 100 square mile area during the course of a day. Since the front is located in the transition region between upwelled equatorial waters and productive surface tuna fishing grounds to the north, it seems possible that instabilities could result in sudden changes in fishing conditions.

It has been known for a long time that the central and eastern equatorial Pacific are relatively rich biologically. But, another result of the TIWE indicates that the front itself may be even richer because of converging water masses. The upwelling water from the south and warmer tropical water from north meet at the front, concentrating nutrients, zooplankton and prey species. Furthermore, velocity measurements during TIWE indicated that the instability waves acted to enhance this mechanism.

Consequently, there is strong evidence that the equatorial front, usually found near 2-3°N, is regulated by the passage of tropical instability waves in the fall. Moreover, some investigators have suggested that the front may be the cause of the waves. In any case, it seems likely that the structure of food chains in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific may depend strongly on the effects that these waves have on the front. As the boundary between nutrient-rich, upwelling, equatorial water and warmer tropical water is displaced by instabilities, prime fishing conditions may migrate tens of miles in a matter of a few days.

Researchers presently analyzing data from TIWE to determine the cause of instability waves and the effects they may have on the mean conditions of the central Pacific. For example, do instabilities intensify the equatorial front or simply move it around? We also plan to quantify changes in vertical motions near the front in the presence of instabilities. These investigations should help in understanding the physical processes, such as upwelling and advection, which regulate primary production and food chain structures in the central equatorial and tropical Pacific.

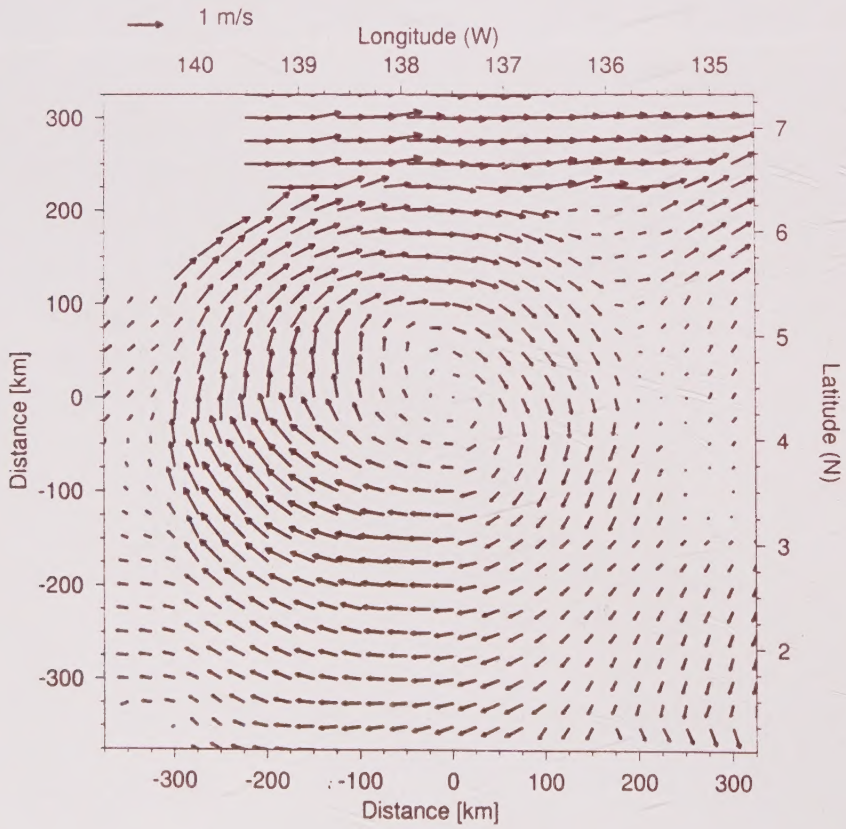

Figure 4. Water movement pattern of a tropical instability wave in the Pacific Ocean's Southern Equatorial Current.

NMFS TUNA-DOLPHIN OBSERVER PROGRAM ENDS

Alan Jackson, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, CA 92038-0271

On April 13, 1995, the final NMFS tuna-dolphin observer returned from sea, concluding the U.S. Government's on-board dolphin mortality monitoring program that became mandatory for the U.S. eastern tropical Pacific tuna purse seine fleet in 1976. In the intervening years, some 500 NMFS observers accompanied over 1,300 fishing trips and recorded the dolphin mortality from 30,000 sets.

In addition to documenting dolphin mortality, NMFS observers collected biological, oceanographic and habitat data, documented the fleet's compliance with U.S. Marine Mammal Regulations, and often pitched in to wash dishes, mop decks, clean heads, sew net and sort the catch. The key to this program's unqualified success was the dedication of the observers who were willing to spend periods of up to 120 days at sea and whose integ-

rity was never seriously challenged. The NMFS Tuna-Dolphin Observer Program quickly set the standard by which most other U.S. and international observer programs came to be measured.

Although the NMFS tuna-dolphin observer program has ended, the issue of dolphin mortality and tuna purse seining in the ETP is not being abandoned. The U.S. ETP tuna purse seine fleet will now be monitored by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission with 100% observer coverage under their international Dolphin Conservation Program. The U.S. joins Belize, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Spain, Vanuatu and Venezuela in this program. Under the IATTC program, the dolphin mortality for the international fleet dropped from over 15,000 dolphins in 1992 to just 4,000 in 1994.

When the U.S. Government's mandatory tuna-dolphin observer program was initiated in 1976, the dolphin kill rate for the U.S. fleet was an average of 11.4 dolphins per set. In 1993, the last year in which there was much dolphin fishing by the fleet, the kill rate was a remarkably low 0.6 dolphin per set. What caused this dramatic reduction in dolphin mortality? There were many factors, not the least of which were the innovations and efforts that came from the fishermen themselves. Scientific investigations of gear and dolphin rescue procedures conducted by the NMFS and the IATTC also resulted in reducing dolphin mortality. And environmental activists cannot be denied some credit by publicizing the situation and fostering consumer-based incentives for reducing the kill.

In April of 1990 all three major U.S. tuna canners announced that they would no longer purchase tuna that was caught in association with dolphins. This "dolphin safe" policy resulted in a market-driven reallocation of effort by the U.S. tuna fleet from "dolphin fishing" to catching only tuna not associated with dolphins. Some U.S. vessels relocated to the western Pacific where dolphin-safe fishing practices had been successful for many years. Some vessels left the U.S. registry. However, the U.S. dolphin-safe super seiners that remained in the ETP have continued to be successful: In 1994, they made an average of five fishing trips per vessel, each time unloading an average of 1,200 tons of tuna.

The author would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of all the NMFS tuna-dolphin observers who collected the data that served as the basis for scores of scientific research papers and the development of effective procedures for reducing the dolphin kill. These observers were placed in the center of the government-fisherman-environmentalist dynamics and, therefore, had a demanding role, serving as scientist, diplomat, witness to the dolphin mortality and shipmate to the fisherman. Because of their dedication, perseverance and integrity, sound scientific conclusions were drawn, rational decisions were made and the outlook for an important marine resource became a lot brighter.

An abstract from a recently published paper written by a SWFSC scientist is presented in this space to announce its availability and to report results of tuna research conducted by Center staff.

RECENT SWFSC PUBLICATION: "EFFORT REDUCTION UNDER LIMITED ENTRY: ATTRITION VERSUS FRACTIONAL LICENSES IN THE HAWAII LONGLINE FLEET"

Ralph E. Townsend[1] and Samuel G. Pooley[2]. 1994. North American Journal of Fisheries Management 14:297-306.

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Fishery management that incorporates transferable, fractional licenses is examined as an alternative to the current program of limited permit transferability in the Hawaii longline fishery. Fractional licenses would accomplish the effort reduction that attrition of nontransferable permits was supposed to accomplish in this fishery, but without the inefficiencies, inequities, and uncertainties that have been encountered under the existing program.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNA FISHERIES

Editor's note: The following news items, compiled from fishery trade and industry journals, newspapers and NMFS reports, are provided only as a service to our readers. The NMFS does not guarantee their accuracy.

WESTERN PACIFIC

Taiwanese Frozen Sashimi Exports--Representatives from Taiwan and Japan met again during November last year to review frozen sashimi tuna exports from Taiwan. They agreed to keep 1995 exports at last year's level, 99,000 mt. Although Taiwan suggested an increase to 120,000 mt, the Japanese preferred a reduction due to concern over the stability of the tuna resource and market. Although total supply of frozen tuna to Japan in 1994 dropped to 507,000 mt compared to 528,000 mt in 1993, there was a decline in tuna price by 10-20% in the Japanese market. (INFOFISH *Trade News*, May 2, 1995)

Japan Donates Tuna Longliner--In March 1995, Japan gave the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) a 28-gross-registered-ton tuna longliner valued at $1.4 million. The vessel was transferred to the FSM National Fisheries Corporation. This is the third tuna longliner Japan has donated to Micronesia since 1990. In its second national development plan, Micronesia cited tuna fishery development and improved resource management as national goals. (NMFS from *Nikkan Suisan Tsushin*, March 13, 1995)

Single Tuna Earns $80,000--A 327 kg southern bluefin tuna, caught by a longliner based at Auckland, New Zealand, fetched $80,000 on the Tokyo market. Ten crewmen worked in rotation for 4.5 hours to get the 2.4-meter-long tuna aboard while fishing east of Mahia and south of Gisborne off New Zealand. The vessel then made an unscheduled visit to Gisborne to have the bluefin carefully craned off in a sling to avoid bruising which could have hurt the selling price. The fish was packed into an ice-filled and plastic-lined crate to be driven 300 km to Auckland for despatch to Tokyo, where it brought $260 a kg. (*Fishing News International*, May 1995)

Freeze on Australian Vessel Replacements--The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) recently announced a precautionary measure to sustain fish stocks and viability in the east coast tuna fishery. The AFMA announced a temporary freeze on large pelagic longline vessel replacements in the historic zone of the fishery, effective until the end of July. The freeze applied to all replacement vessels between 22 and 32 meters length overall. AFMA implemented the freeze following a recommendation by the East Coast Tuna Management Advisory Committee that boat replacements be halted for an interim period while the Committee examines the issue of maximum size restrictions for inshore operations. (*Australian Fisheries*, April 1995)

New Fishing Port for Malaysia--An international fishing port expected to be built in Penang, Malaysia, in early 1998 at a cost of $20 million will attract large 700 GRT vessels compared to the 50-70 GRT Taiwanese and Japanese vessels now using Malaysian facilities. While income generated by the landings of small vessels is currently about $55 million, income should rise to about $210 million upon completion of the new fishing port. Tuna vessels that were operating in the Indian Ocean started using Penang as their landing base about eight years ago. Sashimi grade tuna are selected and air-freighted to Japan and the United States, while the remainder are frozen for processing and canning. Ancillary activities such as supplies of bunker oil, fuel, ice, food and bait stand to gain with this new development as should repair and maintenance services, and telecommunication and infrastructural facilities. (INFOFISH *International*, February 1995)

Japanese Bycatch to be Utilized--Japanese longline tuna boats will now be allowed to land and process two species of fish--Ray's bream and blue whaler shark--in Tasmania. These incidental catches were previously regarded as discards, and the Japanese boats were not allowed to land them in Australia. (INFOFISH *Trade News*, June 16, 1995)

Longline Bird Mortality--A report on the number of petrels and albatrosses incidentally hooked and drowned by Japanese southern bluefin tuna longliners working New Zealand waters was presented at an international seabird conference in Glasgow, Scotland. Sandy Bartie, curator of birds at the Museum of New Zealand, calculated that, from 1987 to 1994, at least 11,700 birds including 7,500 albatrosses were caught in New Zealand waters by Japanese vessels alone. He estimates the seabird mortality due to longlines since 1973 to be about 54,000 seabirds, mostly albatrosses. New Zealand is the albatross center of the world with 13 different species of the bird. More

UPCOMING TUNA MEETINGS

(Organizer; meeting type: sci=science, adm=administration, com=commercial)

- AUG 16-18. South Pacific Commission (SPC) Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish Meeting. Noumea, New Caledonia. (SPC; sci)
- AUG 21-23. 5th Meeting of the Western Pacific Yellowfin Tuna Research Group. Noumea, New Caledonia. (SPC; sci)
- SEP 25-29. 6th Expert Consultation on Indian Ocean Tunas. Colombo, Sri Lanka. (Indo-Pacific Tuna Program; sci)
- OCT 2-7. Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) Species Groups Meetings for Tropical Tunas, International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. Madrid, Spain. (ICCAT; sci)
- OCT 9-13. SCRS, Plenary Meeting, ICCAT. Madrid, Spain. (ICCAT; sci)
- OCT 25-27. 4th INFOFISH World Tuna Trade Conference. Manila, The Philippines. (INFOFISH; com)
- NOV 13-17. Fourteenth Regular Meeting of the ICCAT. Madrid, Spain. (ICCAT; adm)

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- JUL 28-AUG 2. 2nd World Fisheries Congress. Brisbane, Australia.

than 15 species of albatross, petrel and other seabirds are accidentally taken by longlines in New Zealand waters. The birds are attracted to the longline which can have 1,500 hooked squid baits on one 130 km longline. (*Fishing News International*, June 1995)

EASTERN PACIFIC

Japan-Peru Sashimi Enterprise-- The Inter-American Investment Corporation and the Japan International Development Organization signed an agreement to co-finance a $6.2 million enterprise in Peru to export frozen sashimi tuna. The project will use some funds to buy fishing vessels equipped with industrial chillers and freezers, and there is the possibility of buying a processing plant in the Peruvian city of Paita. (INFOFISH *Trade News*, June 16, 1995)

WESTERN ATLANTIC

Changes for East Coast Fishers--Major changes are in the wind for bluefin and yellowfin tuna fishermen on the U.S. East Coast. A NMFS proposal calls for closing the bluefin general category two days a week (Wednesday and Sunday) and combining the quotas for June and July. The "days-off" proposal is close to that supported by the East Coast Tuna Association (ECTA), which wanted three no-fishing days. Recreational fishermen generally oppose the days-off idea. The goal is to extend the season, which has seen increasingly earlier closures for the past few years, and match landings with Japan's market schedule. NMFS also proposes limiting entry into the harpoon category. While many fishermen from Maine and Cape Cod support limited entry, others are adamantly opposed. Finally, the agency wants to place the additional 76-ton allocation that was awarded to U.S. bluefin boats by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas in the reserve category for distribution this summer.

Regarding yellowfin, NMFS proposes capping the purse seine catch at 350 tons and imposing limited entry on the small fleet. The agency proposes a minimum 22-inch size for commercial and recreational fishermen as well as permit requirements for charter and party boats this September and private sportfishing vessels next January 1. Hearings were scheduled to begin May 23, with final comments due by June 7. (*National Fisherman*, July 1995)

EASTERN ATLANTIC

China Requests ICCAT Membership--To underline China's position as a new entrant into tuna fishing in the Atlantic Ocean, Chinese authorities requested membership in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. Bearing in mind that Taiwan is an ICCAT observer and already has a considerable record of tuna fishing in the Atlantic Ocean, the request may give rise to possible political concerns. The issue will probably be subject to lengthy negotiations before a decision is made. (INFOFISH *Trade News*, May 16, 1995)

INDIAN OCEAN

SAPMER Orders Longliner-- The French fishing company SAPMER has ordered a 33-meter longliner worth $3.9 million to target yellowfin and bigeye tuna for sashimi. It will operate off Seychelles waters around Reunion Island and the southern part of Madagascar. (INFOFISH *Trade News*, May 16, 1995)

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